UCLA Faculty Association

News and opinion from Dan Mitchell since 2009

Friday, May 10, 2024

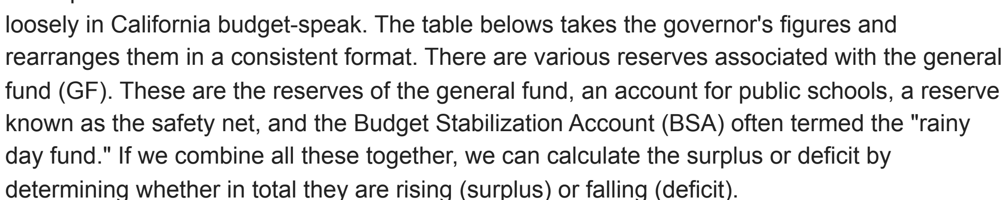
The May Revise



As is customary, Governor Newsom presented his "May Revise" budget earlier today. Unlike past budget presentations, this one was on the short side (for Newsom): 38 minutes for the basic presentation and another 63 minutes for Q&A with reporters.

Details of the budget are not yet on the Dept. of Finance budget website but we do have an outline from the summary charts shown on the table below.

As blog readers will know, words such as surplus and deficit are often used loosely in California budget-speak. The table belows takes the governor's figures and rearranges them in a consistent format. There are various reserves associated with the general fund (GF). These are the reserves of the general fund, an account for public schools, a reserve known as the safety net, and the Budget Stabilization Account (BSA) often termed the "rainy day fund." If we combine all these together, we can calculate the surplus or deficit by determining whether in total they are rising (surplus) or falling (deficit).



As can be seen from the table, the governor is proposing a relatively small deficit of $2.3 billion for next year based on his forecasts of revenues and expenditures. It is important to stress that a budget proposal is a forecast. Indeed, even the budget for this year that is shown is partly a

The Council of UC Faculty Associations

- FAQs for Senate Faculty about Possible Strike by UAW May 2024
- CUCFA Statement On Campus Protests
- We Support BOARS Math Requirements Recommendation
- Support AB-2349 – The Cal-Bridge Program
- Drop the Charges Against January Regents' Meeting Protestors

Remaking the University

- The Authoritarian Personality Comes to College - 5/2/2024
- The New McCarthyism Intensifies - 4/30/2024
- THE STRIKE - 12/6/2022

Higher Ed. News & Commentary

- Chronicle of Higher Education
- Inside Higher Education
- Remaking the University
- Changing Universities
- California Professor

Search This Blog

forecast because the year is not over. And, although we don't have clear numbers, it is apparent that this year is in deficit by a large amount, well over $30 billion.

Until more details are posted, any developments specific to UC cannot be discussed.

$ Millions	Current Year 2023-24	Proposed Next Year 2024-25	Surplus /Deficit
GF Starting Balance	$46,260	$9,726	
Revenue & Transfers	189,354	205,249	
Expenditures	225,888	200,974	
Surplus/ Deficit	-36,534	+4,275	
GF Ending Balance	9,726	14,001	+4,275
Public School	2,590	0	-2,590
Safety Net	900	0	-900
BSA	22,555	19,429	-3,126
Total Reserves	35,771	33,430	-2,341
		-2,341	

Source: https://ebudget.ca.gov/2024-25/pdf/BudgetSummary/SummaryCharts.pdf.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 4:25 PM No comments:

The Monday Arrests

The NY Times is reporting the following about those arrested during a disturbance at Moore Hall last Monday:

Police officials at the University of California, Los Angeles, said on Wednesday that the dozens of pro-Palestinian protesters who were arrested in a parking garage on campus earlier this week had tools and other items that were intended to help occupy a campus building. Members of the group had several metal pipes, a pair of bolt cutters, super glue, padlocks and a long chain, according to a statement from the U.C.L.A. Police Department. They also had literature that included "The Do-It-Yourself Occupation Guide" and the "De-Arrest Primer."

Search

UC Faculty Associations

- UCLA Faculty Association
- UCSB Faculty Association
- UCSC Faculty Association
- UCB Faculty Association
- Council of UC Faculty Associations

Other Faculty Organizations

- American Association of University Professors
- California Faculty Association (NEA)
- UC-AFT

Topics

UC (1822) politics (1723) UC Regents (1709) health care (1281) State Budget (1191) governor (1046) UC budget crisis (909) UC-Berkeley (828) pension (639) diversity (620) pensions (588) tuition (518) admissions (485) athletics (439) CSU (377) transportation (363) UC-Davis (352) online education (333) ucrp (293) audio (287) UCOP (282) new hotel-conference center (281) UC enrollment (267) uc retirement (265) traffic (259) enrollment (239) UC-San Diego (227) community colleges (221) LAO (201) UC-Irvine (171) fund raising (154) UC-Santa Barbara (138) UC-Santa Cruz (133) ballot



Police officers initially arrested 44 people and charged most of them with conspiracy to commit a crime, according to the statement. Two local journalists were among those detained, but they were released without charges after being taken to a Los Angeles Police Department jail. The police said they did not have press credentials. A third person was also released without charges...

Of those arrested, 35 were U.C.L.A. students, the police said. Four of the people arrested on Monday had also been arrested on May 2 when the police shut down a pro-Palestinian encampment at the campus. The 41 who face charges were released after being booked and cited, the police said...

Full story at https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/08/us/ucla-activist-arrest-pipes.html.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 5:30 AM No comments:  

Labels: UCLA

Justice is supposed to be blind. The jury isn't



It's unclear at this point how the Academic Senate hearing to deal with censuring the chancellor is going to proceed. It's on Zoom, but any Senate member can be in on the call and can speak, not just the official members of the Legislative Assembly. So there could be logistical problems. This particular meeting could have a large number of people on the call, given its unusual agenda.

But even if logistical problems don't arise, we have yet to hear from the chancellor. Justice is supposed to be blind, but the jury is supposed to have the relevant facts. The jury should not be blind. Shouldn't the chancellor be able to speak or send some kind of communication in direct answer to the charges being made? Of course, there is no requirement that he do so, but should not the offer be made?



At least some consideration might be given to postponing the vote, too, since a cooling off period might allow more information to be gathered.

As blog readers will know, yours truly has set out some suggestions for what the chancellor needs to do at this point.* But he may need a reasonable amount of time to do what has been suggested, or even to decide not to.

====

*https://uclafacultyassociation.blogspot.com/2024/05/academic-senate-vote-on-censuring-block.html.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 5:15 AM No comments:  

Ten Years Ago: Remarks of Retired UC Chief Financial Officer on Divestment



Peter Taylor, the UC chief financial officer who preceded the current chief investment officer (the title was changed), spoke to a group at the Reagan Hospital in 2014, shortly after leaving UC.* You can hear his remarks below in response to questions from the audience or look at the transcript. (Note: The transcript was computer-generated with some corrections.)

===

*Bio at https://investors.23andme.com/board-member/peter-taylor

===

Taylor's remarks at the link below:

- ▶ 2012 (839)
- ▶ 2011 (738)
- ▶ 2010 (431)
- ▶ 2009 (12)

Contributors

- California Policy Issues
- Toby Higbie
- UCLA Faculty Association



Or direct to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZTXbABD-3o4.

Transcript:

Taylor: Yes sir?

Question: there's been a lot of push for a divestment of university funds and things like fossil fuels. We've already gotten rid of tobacco and guns and the governor sort of says well maybe we'll just do coal. And so on, and I'm just wondering whether you'd like to comment on the sort of social role in investing university funds.

Taylor: I do not believe there should be a social role in investing university funds. I believe the fiduciary responsibility of the board of regents, just like it is for the board of foundations, is to maximize returns to drive revenues into supporting the good things that the university does. Look, I ... My mother passed away from lung cancer. I hate tobacco companies. If they go out of business tomorrow, I'll be the happiest person around. But the regents's decision to divest from tobacco is a financial catastrophe. That decision has resulted in half a billion dollars less money today in the retirement system than there would have been had we stayed invested in tobacco. And with all due respect, the decision of the board of regents to divest from tobacco and a number of other institutions... I don't think tobacco companies are any less profitable, any less strong any less - you know - vibrant, than they were years ago when that decision was made then.

So with all due respect, no, I'm not a big fan of fossil fuel divestment because I think it runs contrary to our responsibility to drive improvement in teaching and research. And one other thing I think is important you know. Fossil fuels are much bigger than tobacco. It is about 17 percent of the world's economy is directly or indirectly related to fossil fuels. So if you're suddenly telling your investment staff you can't invest in 17 percent of your options out there, what do you think are going to happen to our returns in the pension system and the endowment. They're going to crater because you you just don't have the options.

Now we're doing very positive things in this regard, and I'll be honest the new chief investment officer we just hired Jagdeep Bachhar from Canada started on April 1st. One of the attractive things when we were going through the search process that I managed for the board was the fact that he had a very good track record investing in sustainable technologies in sorting out those winners in the green space that have actually produced revenue, become real companies. And that was very attractive to the board to say we'd like to be proactive and positive when it comes to sustainability.

But frankly pulling money out of an oil company... It doesn't hurt the oil company frankly. Probably is really great for Chinese investors to come in buy that stock and put money in the bank. You think i'm strongly opinionated on this?

[Laughter]

Well... And it also sends a terrible message to a donor, right? One of the things that regents have got to overcome is to send out the message that they're above and beyond making political decisions with other people's money. And if you're out there trying to get somebody to give you a seven-figure gift on behalf of the university are you going to give it to a bunch of political appointees who will - because somebody has a demonstration in front of their house? You can't. You can't do that. The donor will then be reluctant to say... I'd like to support the university but, you know, are they going to take this hard-earned money that i've made that I want to use to support UCLA and now use it to fight somebody else's political priorities. I don't think that's the right message. To say it makes it real tough when a university just launched a billion dollar campaign.

I could go on and on about this subject, too, but I know it took four minutes just to answer that one.

Question: Following up, does your CFO mentality about these issues go as far as abandoning any moral leadership role that this great university would play? And I just through out as an example the divestiture from South Africa during its apartheid stage. How do you feel about... How would you feel about that: as you just stated or different?

Taylor: Yeah, so for every one of those I could show you a tobacco one where it's had no impact. It is not my job as CFO to impose my moral compass on somebody else. My job is to make sure that the funds necessary to run this place and to allow it to thrive in an era of dramatic cutbacks from the state. And you know when it comes to setting the moral compass for the university, again, is it appropriate to tell patients in this place who are paying the bills, hey, you know some of that money we're gonna... that you're paying for that cancer treatment or for that that open heart surgery, we're gonna take some of that money and we're gonna use it to pursue things that are far afield from anything that impacts you directly for which you're paying a bill.

Question: Do you think the board of regents has the same or kind of the same focus on these issues that the chief financial officer had.

Taylor: I think the board of regents ought to have a singular focus on doing what is in the best long-term interest of the university. And i'm not sure divesting from fossil fuels will drive us in that direction. I don't see how, honestly. You know where the regents have gotten in trouble is when they start playing politics based upon their own personal views. SB 1, SB 2, right? The effort to ban affirmative action. Some would say that was politically motivated. Really put the university a bit of a tailspin for a while. Was that the right thing? Should they have done that decision? You know you can argue this both ways.

I know and let's face it, I met with the students who were advocating the fossil fuel divestment six or seven times over the last year and, you know, they're passionate and I don't doubt the existence of climate change. I don't want something that's going to make a difference... Right, if we're really serious about climate change well why don't we say you can't drive to campus anymore. You have to use public transit. You know instead we put the onus on somebody else instead of telling there's a lot more fossil fuel being created by people driving to and from campus every day than where our investments go. Or we're not willing to take that kind of sacrifice. We're willing to push the sacrifice onto somebody else. Well, if we want to make a moral statement, let's say we're going to do it with our own behavior first and foremost.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 5:00 AM No comments:

Labels: UC Regents

Thursday, May 9, 2024

Make sure your delete key is close at hand

Employee [redacted]

As an employee of University of California, Los Angeles, each year you are eligible to schedule a meeting with a representative who will provide you with answers to your specific state, federal and individual retirement benefit questions.

You will receive complimentary information that will tell you:

- Your potential income when you retire.
- How much longer you may have to work.
- Options to help you save more money for retirement, without affecting your take home pay.
- Which providers' options have Guaranteed income when you retire.

Please be sure to indicate which type of appointment you prefer while scheduling. Please also include your direct cell phone number

Daytime appointments are filling up fast. In order to secure your spot, please click on the link below, or simply reply "yes" to this email.

Click Here

This meeting is held with an independent professional for the purposes of education and planning. Representatives are duly licensed by the State Department of Insurance. They are not affiliated with University of California, Los Angeles.

You may receive an email such as the one above. It is actually more honest than some others of its ilk in that it admits to having no relationship to UCLA. Two cheers for honesty. But three cheers for having a delete key.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 10:10 AM No comments:

Labels: uc retirement

Maybe the Outlook isn't so BREIT



Business Insider raises questions about BREIT's claimed valuations and returns. As blog readers will know, UC's chief investment officer - on his own motion - bailed out BREIT with $4.5 billion of pension and endowment funds when it was experiencing a slow-motion run on the bank in return for a promise of a special extra-high return. Only one regent on the Investments Committee raised any concerns about that transaction:

In 2017, Blackstone — the world's largest private-equity firm, which usually caters to big institutions and the very wealthy — decided to give ordinary investors an opportunity to get in on the firm's magic. It created BREIT, a private fund that buys commercial real estate like warehouses and apartment buildings, and marketed it to everyday investors as an "all-weather strategy to build long-term wealth across market cycles."

And it was magic: By offering an annual dividend of about 4% in a world where interest rates were close to zero, BREIT quickly became a giant. At its peak in 2021, the fund was attracting as much as $3 billion a month in new investments. Today, BREIT boasts assets of $114 billion — about 8% of Blackstone's entire fee-earning assets — and has generated over $5 billion in management and performance fees.

But over the past two years, some investors have grown suspicious that BREIT isn't the rock-solid investment Blackstone claims it is. Since its inception, the fund says it has delivered an annualized net return of 10.5% — almost double an index of publicly traded REITs. Even as commercial real estate has been battered in the wake of the pandemic, BREIT has somehow managed to defy gravity, outperforming comparable funds by seemingly fantastic margins. In the fall of 2022, after the Fed's interest-rate increases began to shake the commercial real-estate market, investors began asking for their money back — more than $15 billion to date. Faced with a run on the fund, Blackstone cited a provision that allowed it to take its time refunding antsy investors — a decision that only served to further alarm the market. Shares in Blackstone tumbled by nearly 20%. Last year, BREIT failed to generate enough cash to cover its annual dividend.

In recent months, the fund has appeared to recover from the debacle. BREIT announced it was able to fulfill 100% of the repurchase requests it received in February, which had slowed to just under $1 billion. Amid the promise of a rebound, Blackstone's stock has regained almost 50% from its lows. "I believe we'll look back at 2023 as the cyclical bottom for our firm," Steve Schwarzman, Blackstone's CEO, told analysts at an earnings call in January.

Blackstone signage outside Blackstone Group headquarters in NYC

Investors in Blackstone's real-estate fund asked for their money back in droves — more than $15 billion to date. Jeenah Moon/Reuters

But the rosy picture that Blackstone paints may not tell the whole story. In recent months I've spoken with veteran analysts, accountants, and investors who have come to believe that BREIT is essentially a house of cards. That's because the returns the fund claims it has delivered depend almost entirely on BREIT's own estimates, which skeptics believe are wildly inflated. What's more, when BREIT faced a flood of redemption requests from investors, it only fulfilled all those requests after raising cash from new investors — including one that received a sweetheart deal from Blackstone to invest in BREIT. "It is the absolute definition of a Ponzi scheme," said Nate Koppikar, who runs a hedge fund called Orso Partners that has shorted Blackstone's stock because of concerns over BREIT. Unless the real-estate market comes roaring back, analysts warn, BREIT could end up shrinking to a fraction of its current size, leaving the fund's investors holding the bag.

"Surveying some of the ways that Blackstone has misled investors over the past five months, we are more convinced than ever that BREIT is a bad investment created for the benefit of Blackstone," Craig McCann, a financial analyst who served as an economist at the Securities Exchange Commission, wrote last year. "Investors should not accept anything Blackstone and BREIT state as truthful."

It's impossible to know exactly how valuable BREIT is. Because the fund is not publicly traded, the market doesn't set its price per share — Blackstone does. You buy shares in BREIT based on your faith in Blackstone's investing brilliance and in the firm's account of its own performance. Investing in a private real-estate trust like BREIT is, ultimately, an exercise in trust.

BREIT's returns are based on a measure called net asset value, or NAV. That's supposed to be the value of all the assets the fund owns, minus its debt. Blackstone told Business Insider that it has an "incredibly rigorous valuation process" — one it says has led it to adjust its NAV more aggressively than other REITS. But BREIT doesn't let investors or regulators see some of the crucial assumptions that go into calculating its NAV. As BREIT's financial documents state, Blackstone "is ultimately and solely responsible for the determination of our NAV." The methods used to calculate it are "not prescribed by rules of the SEC or any other regulatory agency," and the NAV "is not audited by our independent registered public accounting firm."

Chilton Capital Management, which invests in publicly traded REITs, analyzed the way Blackstone adjusts the value of BREIT to reflect changes in the underlying real estate it owns. Rather than being "marked to market" every day — or every millisecond, like public REITS — Blackstone adjusts its NAV on a monthly basis. In today's volatile real-estate market, that means its stated value can lag way behind reality. "It inherently is a flawed process when prices are changing quickly," Chilton observes. "We refer to this imperfect appraisal process as 'mark to magic.'" In 2022, after the crash in commercial real estate, publicly traded REITs that own assets similar to BREIT's — multifamily housing and industrial buildings — have been selling at sharp discounts. But BREIT, by "marking to magic," has continued to claim far higher returns.

Using a collection of market-based metrics, Chilton concluded last April that BREIT was overstating the value of its NAV by more than 55%.

McCann, who is now a principal at SLCG Economics Consulting, reached a similar conclusion. He calculated that the cumulative returns of other funds in the sectors in which BREIT is concentrated plunged by over 30% in 2022. Yet BREIT claimed that its value increased during the same period. In the dry language of market analysts, McCann called the fund's claims about its NAV "unreliable."

Blackstone considers such comparisons unfair. It insists that BREIT shouldn't be compared to publicly traded funds, which it argues are more volatile than private offerings. In a statement to BI, the firm insists that BREIT is able to outperform other funds for a simple reason: because it owns better assets than they do. BREIT's portfolio, Blackstone says, is "concentrated in the best performing sectors (data centers, logistics and student housing) and geographies (virtually no urban exposure)." Only 3% of BREIT's holdings are in office buildings, which have been ground zero for commercial real estate pain. The company points to its performance during the global financial crisis of 2008 as evidence of its ability to outperform its competitors during "periods of dislocation" and notes that it has sold $20 billion of real estate since the beginning of 2022, when interest rates began to rise, generating a profit of $4 billion.

"Not all real estate is created equal," BREIT boasted in a recent letter to stockholders, "and where you invest matters."

But Blackstone's principal claim — that sounder investments have led to higher returns — is difficult to square with the ongoing decline of commercial real estate. It's hard to fathom how BREIT could have bought so many properties at the height of the market and yet somehow been selective enough to have dodged all the post-pandemic downturns suffered by other funds. According to BREIT's own numbers, data centers and student housing make up only a small part of its portfolio. And many of the data centers Blackstone says have already created so much value for the fund aren't even up and running yet — they're still in development...

Full story at https://www.businessinsider.com/blackstone-breit-commercial-real-estate-fund-misled-investors-private-equity-2024-5.

See also https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/07/business/dealbook/blackstone-breit-fund-debate.html.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 5:30 AM No comments:

Labels: endowment, pension, UC Regents

May Revise Friday

The clock is ticking down toward the May Revise deadline. It is a tradition that after his January budget proposal for the following fiscal year, the governor - taking account of later data and projections (and political considerations) - comes up with a revised budget plan in mid-May. The

January proposal already included a "deferral" of the increase for UC due under the so-called compact with the governor.



There is a schedule which puts the deadline for the May Revise for fiscal year 2024-25 as May 14, i.e., next Tuesday.* According to the Sacramento Bee, the May Revise presentation will be on this Friday,** May 10, ahead of the deadline. Presumably, something will be said about whatever the governor proposes at the upcoming Regents meetings next week.

Tomorrow, the state controller will release figures for cash receipts through April - normally the big receipt month since personal income taxes are due. That will provide yet another data point.

We await.

===

*https://rrnetwork.org/policy/key-dates.

**https://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article288392160.html.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 5:00 AM No comments:

Labels: controller, governor, politics, State Budget, UC budget crisis, UC Regents

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

Academic Senate Vote on Censuring Block this Friday



Received via email:

To: Members of the Los Angeles Division of the Academic Senate

Dear Colleagues:

The Legislative Assembly will hold an emergency special meeting on Friday, May 10, 2024, from 2:00–4:00 p.m. via Zoom. The agenda is available now on the Legislative Assembly Agenda page.

The purpose of this meeting is to consider the adoption of two separate resolutions proposed by voting Legislative Assembly members:

1. Resolution of No Confidence in Chancellor Block

   "Whereas, Chancellor Block failed to ensure the safety of our students and grievously mishandled the events of last week

   Resolved, that we make a motion of no confidence in Chancellor Block."

2. Resolution to Censure Chancellor Block

   "Whereas, Chancellor Block failed to ensure the safety of our students and grievously mishandled the events of last week

Resolved, that we make a motion to censure Chancellor Block."

=====

Yours truly suggests Block do two things to head off being censured:

First, as we have noted, he has made no apology for mishandling the entire encampment matter and instead gone in for a PR campaign focused on finding some thugs who attacked the encampment. We have noted that there is a history of events both before and after the thug incident. So he needs to apologize.

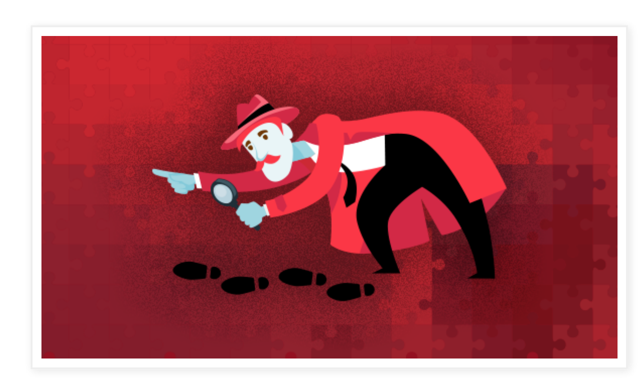
Second, he needs to come clean on the entire process surrounding the encampment issue. Who made what decisions? What was the thinking? Where does he think with the benefit of hindsight errors were made?

Regardless how the votes turn out, an apology and a straight-forward explanation will do more for the chancellor's legacy than any other steps. Sometimes history is kinder than immediate reactions.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 6:48 PM No comments:

Labels: UCLA

Whodunit? Maybe it was Igor!



Yesterday, we posted about the chancellor's deflection by focusing on pursuit of the thugs who attacked the encampment rather than pursuing the Big Questions surrounding the responsibility for allowing a situation to get progressively out of hand over a period of a week, leading to an explosive conclusion.* In effect, the story becomes a **whodunit** rather than who was responsible for it.

But you've got to give the PR folks credit. Deflections, diversions, sleights-of-hand often do work. For example, the LA Times is now breathlessly focused on the use of the latest technology to find the culprits. Images are being scanned!! Social media posts are being scrutinized!! Videos are being watched!! License plates are being read!!

It is shaping up to be perhaps the biggest case in the history of the UCLA Police Department: how to identify dozens of people who attacked a pro-Palestinian camp at the center of campus last week. The mob violence was captured on live television, but it took three hours for police to bring it to an end. Those involved left, and no arrests were made. [Underline added.]

But the trail is not cold.

UCLA detectives are now scanning hundreds of images in an attempt to identify the attackers. They intend to use technology that captures facial images and compares them to other photos on the internet and social media to put names to faces, according to law enforcement sources. The same technology has allowed police to identify suspects in smash-and-grab retail burglaries. It also was the heart of the Jan. 6 investigation, in which videos of those storming the U.S. Capitol helped the FBI identify many of the assailants and led federal prosecutors to charge more than 1,300 people. In those cases, investigators often were able to find social media images of the assailant wearing the same clothing as during the attack.

"Technology has made the entire community into the eyes of law enforcement," said retired Los Angeles police Capt. Paul Vernon, who led an effort after a mini-riot following the Lakers' NBA championship victory in 2010 that resulted in dozens of arrests based on videos, social media posts and security footage. "Photo recognition has gotten a lot easier."

Vernon said an investigator also could gather cellphone data from the immediate area to prove an individual was there at the time of the incident. In some cases, assailants may have posted to their social media accounts, essentially bragging about their actions. Officers wearing body cameras may have also captured some of the behavior, he said. The attackers likely came in vehicles, so UCLA police will be examining data from license plate readers for movements near campus on May 1. Security cameras on streets neighboring the campus where they likely parked could yield more clues...

Full story at https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2024-05-07/ucla-police-use-high-tech-tactics-to-find-masked-mob-who-attacked-encampment.

Yours truly is reminded of the 1950s TV police drama "Dragnet" in which Sargeant Friday of the LAPD always got his man. (Younger folks can Google it or find old Dragnets on YouTube.)

Or maybe it is like Cold War dramas in which the FBI relentlessly pursues Soviet agents using the latest technology:



Or direct to https://ia601509.us.archive.org/28/items/sacramento-city-at-risk/Finding%20Igor%20%28FBI%20purses%20Soviet%20spies%20in%20post-WW2%20Cold%20War-atomic%20era%29.mp4.

Igor sure isn't going to get far with these tech-savvy guys on his trail!

Maybe the fact that the LA Times is fixated on finding the bat-wielding culprits isn't surprising. As they say, it sells newspapers. But yours truly is disappointed that the Academic Senate seemingly has focused on last Tuesday's thugs rather asking the many other questions that need answers:

https://senate.ucla.edu/news/message-academic-senate-leadership.

The Senate can do better.

===

*https://uclafacultyassociation.blogspot.com/2024/05/questions-and-deflections.html.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 5:00 AM No comments:

Labels: UCLA

Tuesday, May 7, 2024

From Moore to More

Yesterday, a series of Bruin Alerts were sent out, first saying classes in Moore Hall should go to remote instruction due to a disturbance, then saying the directive to go to remote instruction would apply to the rest of the campus as well through Friday. From the LA Times:

Heightened and quick-moving police actions against protesters unfolded Monday at UCLA and other campuses, as university officials said there would be little tolerance for demonstrators who



disrupted campus and violated laws and student conduct codes in the wake of last week's violence and tensions at pro-Palestinian encampments.

At UCLA on Monday, campus police arrested 44 pro-Palestinian protesters gathered in a parking structure — actions students called harassment and intimidation — as they assembled before a peaceful protest. Other protesters were ordered to disperse when they entered a campus building. Classes were moved online for the rest of the week as a security precaution.

The action came after UCLA officials vowed to improve security after a violent mob last week attacked a pro-Palestinian encampment that was later torn down by law enforcement. The UCLA police chief has come under intense criticism for the violence and failure to bring in police fast enough to quell the melee...

Initially, an unidentified UCLA police officer told some reporters and observers that those detained were being held for delaying an investigation when asked for identification to look into a possible curfew violation, according to a video posted on social media platform X from a KNX News reporter. Hours later, however, a UCLA police lieutenant told the Daily Bruin that the 43 individuals were arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to commit burglary. One student called this allegation false. The student shared a text sent Sunday about a low-key "sit-in style building occupation" with the rendezvous point at 6 a.m. Monday in the parking structure.

The LAPD and the L.A. County Sheriff's Department, both at the scene, declined to comment on the incident, saying UCLA's Police Department is the lead agency. The Sheriff's Department "is only involved in transporting," said agency spokesperson Deputy Grace Medrano. UCLA officials did not respond to multiple questions about the nature of the arrests. Those who were arrested Monday, who all appeared zip-tied, were escorted from the parking garage to an L.A. County Sheriff's Department bus...

Full story at https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2024-05-06/dozens-detained-at-ucla-early-monday.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 8:20 AM No comments:  

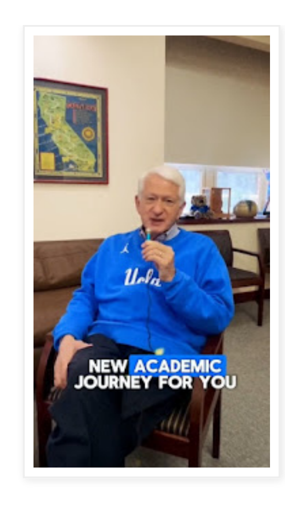
Labels: UCLA

Questions and Deflections

Blog readers will probably have seen the latest statement from the chancellor since the encampment was cleared - and now the campus is back to remote instruction for this week. The



statement is reproduced below in case not. However, it is somewhat of a deflection at this point. The focus of the statement is entirely on identifying the thugs who came on campus a week ago and identifying them. But here's the thing: After a very prolonged delay, the police did intervene. Presumably, in such a situation - an encounter with men with bats - there would be arrests. And when someone is arrested, you find out quickly who they are. So, how can it be that a week later we are still talkiing about identifying them? It can only mean that there were no arrests. How is that even possible?



Moreover, the events of last Tuesday did not occur in a vacuum. There was a growing perception that things were out of control at UCLA, that confrontations would occur without consequences, and that there would be no interventions. Social media and conventional TV amplified that impression. So, as our previous posts have noted, we have a management reshuffle, we have a couple of officials thrown under the bus, *but no apology for letting things get to that point*.

And, by the way, if you are looking for culprits to identify, how about whoever did this (also on last Tuesday)? No statement about that attack has come from the chancellor. Why? Perhaps at least an apology to Eleanor is a week overdue.



Or direct to https://ia600307.us.archive.org/9/items/newsom-4-3-24-snow-survey/UCLA%20-%20Jewish%20student%20attacked%20at%20counterprotest%204-28-24%20interviewed%205-4-24.mp4.

And finally, there is that upcoming congressional hearing coming up. You know, the one at which the is-it-ok-to-call-for-Genocide question has been asked of previous university heads. Perhaps the chancellor, in prepping for that question, might consider a related question. Is it ok

for the head of the USAC Cultural Affairs Commission - which is supported by student fees - to do so? See below:



Or direct to https://ia800307.us.archive.org/9/items/newsom-4-3-24-snow-survey/UCLA%20USAC%20Cultural%20Affairs%20TV%20statement%20at%20encampment.mp4.

We look forward to future statements from the chancellor. But here is the latest one:

May 6, 2024
Investigation into Tuesday, April 30 Attack on our Campus

Chancellor Block shared the following message with the UCLA campus community.

Dear Bruin Community:

Last Tuesday night, a group of instigators came to Royce Quad and violently attacked students, faculty and staff members who were encamped to advocate for Palestinian rights. This was a truly despicable act, and in my message to the campus the following day, I committed to finding those responsible and bringing them to justice.

This remains an important priority. To that end, inaugural Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Safety Officer Rick Braziel is leading a law enforcement investigation to identify the perpetrators of the violence and hold them to account. The LAPD has committed a detective to assist in our investigative efforts, and we have also connected with the FBI about possible assistance. We have spoken to Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón to solicit his help in ensuring that the instigators will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

AVC Braziel and I have directed UCPD to invest whatever resources are needed to conduct a rapid and thorough investigation into the violent attack. UCPD is currently reviewing all available footage from last Tuesday night and speaking to witnesses who were present. We urge anyone who saw the violence firsthand or who has information about the attack to report it as soon as possible.

Our new Office of Campus Safety — under AVC Braziel's leadership — is also conducting a careful review of UCPD's response to the Tuesday night attack. In addition, we are conducting an analysis of UCLA's security protocols and a broader assessment of all acts of violence over the last 12 days, including those against counter-protestors. AVC Braziel's office will create a plan that puts in place key learnings and additional means of protecting the well-being of everyone on our campus.

Holding the instigators of this attack accountable and enhancing our campus safety operations are both critical. Our community members can only learn, work and thrive in an environment where they feel secure.

Sincerely,
Gene D. Block
Chancellor

Source: https://chancellor.ucla.edu/messages/investigation-into-tuesday-april-30-attack-on-our-campus/.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 7:09 AM No comments:

Labels: UCLA

Wondering who got kicked under the bus on Sunday?





If you read yesterday's post on the blame game, you probably already know.* But in case you need guidance, we provide the handy chart above.

====

*https://uclafacultyassociation.blogspot.com/2024/05/the-blame-game-begins.html.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 5:00 AM No comments:

Monday, May 6, 2024

Reports of Disturbance at Moore Hall and Elsewhere

There are reports of disturbances at Moore Hall and possibly Dodd Hall.

A BruinAlert indicated classes in Moore would go back to remote instruction.

A second alert indicated ALL classes would go back to remote instruction.

Police are reported to be involved.



Posted by California Policy Issues at 10:25 AM No comments:  

Labels: UCLA

The Blame Game Begins



So the fault for recent events is the UCLA police chief's, or is UCLA "leadership's," or is UC's safety plan's, or is the overtime payroll system's. At least, those are the choiced listed in an LA Times article, that includes information from "three sources who were not authorized to speak publicly."

*The **UCLA police chief** is facing growing scrutiny for what **three sources** told The Times was a string of serious security lapses before a mob attacked a pro-Palestinian student encampment this week. But the chief, John Thomas, late Friday rejected those allegations and said he did "everything I could" to provide security and keep students safe during a week of strife that left UCLA reeling.*

*On the morning before Tuesday night's attack on the encampment, Thomas assured university leadership that he could mobilize law enforcement "in minutes," acccording to the sources. It took three hours to actually bring in enough officers to quell the violence. Days earlier, **campus leadership** had directed Thomas to create a safety plan that would protect the UCLA community after the encampment was put up last week and began drawing agitators, the sources said. The chief was told to spare no expense to bring in other UC police officers, offer overtime and hire as many private security officers needed to keep the peace.*

But Thomas did not provide a plan to senior UCLA leadership — even after he was again asked to provide one after skirmishes broke out between Israel supporters and pro-Palestinian advocates at dueling rallies Sunday.



The account of Thomas' actions leading up to the attack was provided by Cpublicly. Internal calls are growing for the police chief to step aside as University of California President Michael V. Drake initiates an independent review of UCLA's response, the sources said. Thomas, in an interview with The Times late Friday night, disputed the account as "just not true."

He said he advised leadership from the beginning not to allow an encampment, since it violated campus rules against overnight camping and he feared it could lead to problems as he assessed other protests sweeping the country.



But university leadership, he said, decided to allow the tents "as an expression of students' 1st Amendment rights" and directed that police not be included in any security plan. ***Under UC's systemwide community safety plan, police are deployed as a last resort*** *— guidance developed after UC Davis police pepper-sprayed peaceful protesters in 2011, setting off a firestorm of controversy and an internal review that changed campus practices.*

As a result, Thomas said he developed a plan that relied on private security and made sure to alert the Los Angeles Police Department of the need to respond immediately should problems arise. The private security guards, who were not authorized to make arrests, were instructed to contact UCLA police if needed.

Thomas said he provided daily briefings to campus leadership on the latest situation, the number of resources, the response protocol and assigned roles for those deployed. However, sources said he was directed to provide a written safety strategy outlining the response and preparation for various scenarios, such as a rally, skirmishes or violence — with the direction to do what was needed to keep the community safe — and he failed to deliver.

He acknowledged that he did tell leadership that it would take just minutes to deploy police forces, but he was referring to a general response — not a force large enough to handle the



size of the crowds that clashed that night. But three sources confirmed he was directly asked how long it would take for outside law enforcement to quell any violence.

***The campus police chief reports to Administrative Vice Chancellor Michael Beck, who oversees the UCLA Police Department, the Office of Emergency Management and other campus operations**. Beck did not immediately respond to a request for comment.*

*As altercations at the encampment began to increase, Thomas acknowledged that campus leadership changed direction and authorized him to supplement UCLA police and private security with increased external law enforcement, saying overtime would be paid. He could not recall exactly when that occurred, but he said he immediately contacted the LAPD and L.A. County Sheriff's Department to secure their assistance. But he said the LAPD told him **there was a problem with the payment system between the city and state, so the arrangements "couldn't be done by the time of the attack**."*

On the Tuesday night of the attack, Thomas said he was home watching the Dodgers game when he was alerted to the problems by Beck. He said he immediately called the LAPD's West L.A. station and asked the watch commander to deploy resources. Then he called UCLA's watch commander and instructed him to call in mutual aid assistance from law enforcement with the cities of Beverly Hills, Culver City and Santa Monica and sheriff's deputies.



Thomas said he arrived on campus shortly before midnight and found that 19 officers from UCLA, the LAPD and three of the mutual aid agencies had arrived but had not moved in to quell the violence. When he asked why, he said an LAPD lieutenant told him the force was too small. Thomas said he asked why they couldn't go in with the forces they had, and the lieutenant told him he was directed to wait. It took more than 90 minutes for sufficient forces to arrive and intervene. Thomas said it usually takes an hour or even two to amass "mobile field forces" large enough — 50 officers or more from all over the city — to handle situations like the melee at UCLA. "I did everything I could to increase the police presence that we couldn't provide because of our small department," he said, adding that he was not ready to step aside or resign.

UCLA declined to comment about Thomas' account...

Full story at https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2024-05-03/before-mob-attack-ucla-police-chief-was-ordered-to-create-security-plan-but-didnt-sources-say.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 5:30 AM No comments:  

Labels: UCLA

Next Regents Agenda Available



May 14-16, 2024 UC-Merced

Tuesday, **May 14, 2024**

Noon: **Investments Committee** (open session - includes public comment session)

Public Comment Period (30 minutes)

I-1 Discussion: Review of Performance for the Third Quarter of Fiscal Year 2023–24 of UC Pension, Endowment, Blue and Gold Pool, Working Capital, and Retirement Savings

--

2:00 pm **Special Committee on Athletics** (closed session)

Action: Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of January 23, 2024

S1(X) Discussion: Student Athlete-Related Litigation and Legal Issues

--

Upon end of closed session:

Special Committee on Athletics (open session)

Action: Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of October 11, 2023 and January 23, 2024

S2 Action: UCLA and UC Berkeley Financial Contribution

S3 Discussion: Developments in College Athletics

S4 Discussion: Strategic Campus Athletics Overview: UC Merced

S5 Discussion: Student Athlete Perspectives: UC San Diego and UC Santa Barbara

===

Wednesday, May 15, 2024

8:30 am **Board** (open session - includes public comment session)

Public Comment Period (30 minutes)

Remarks of the Chair of the Board

Remarks of the President of the University

Remarks of the Chair of the Academic Senate

Committee Report Including Approvals of Recommendations from Committee: Special Committee on Nominations (meeting of April 11, 2024)

--

9:30 am **Compliance and Audit Committee** (open session)

Action: Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of March 20, 2024

C1 Action: Consent item: Approval of the External Audit Plan for the Year Ending June 30, 2024

--

Upon end of open session:

Compliance and Audit Committee (closed session)

Action: Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of March 20, 2024

C2(X) Discussion: Review of University of California Cybersecurity Metrics

C3(X) Action: Recommended Settlements for Board Action

C4(X) Discussion: Appellate, Trial Court Developments and Updates

C5(X) Information: Settlements and Separation Agreements under Delegated Authority Reported from February 1, 2024 to March 31, 2024

Note: C3(X), C4(X) and C5(X) involve various legal cases that appear to cover such matters as People's Park, antisemitism, medical malpractice, employment discrimination, and other topics.

--

10:45 am **Governance Committee** (closed session)

Action: Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of March 20, 2024

G1(X) Discussion: Collective Bargaining Matters

G2(X) Discussion: 2024-25 Systemwide Salary Program Increases for Certain Level One Senior Management Group Members and an Employee in the Managers and Senior Professionals Program

G3(X) Discussion: Appointment of and Compensation for Interim Senior Vice President – External Relations and Communications, Office of the President

--

Upon end of closed session:

Governance Committee (open session)

Action: Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of January 24, 2024

G2 Action: Approval of 2024-25 Systemwide Salary Program Increases for Certain Level One Senior Management Group Members and an Employee in the Managers and Senior Professionals Program as Discussed in Closed Session

G3 Action: Approval of Appointment of and Compensation for Interim Senior Vice President – External Relations and Communications, Office of the President as Discussed in Closed Session

G4 Discussion: Investment Performance and Compensation Benchmarking Methodology for Office of the Chief Investment Officer, Office of the President

--

12:30 pm **Academic and Student Affairs Committee** (closed session)

Action: Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of May 17, 2023

A1X Action: Appointment of Regents' Professor, School of Theater, Film, and Television, Department of Theater, Los Angeles Campus

--

Upon end of closed session:

Academic and Student Affairs Committee (open session)

Action :Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of March 20, 2024

A2 Action: Approval of Multi-Year Plans for Professional Degree Supplemental Tuition for Twelve Graduate Professional Degree Programs and OneYear Extensions of Multi-Year Plans for Eleven Graduate Professional Degree Programs

A3 Discussion: Astronomy at the University of California

Note: The Hawaiian telescope project - TMT - is likely to come up here.

A4 Discussion: STEM Peer Mentorship Programs at the University of California

--

3:00 pm **Finance and Capital Strategies Committee** (open session)

Action: Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of March 20, 2024

Consent Agenda:

F1A Action: Consent Item: Fiscal Year 2024-25 General Revenue Bond Issuance

F1B Action: Consent Item: Continuation of the Life Safety Fee, Berkeley Campus

F1C Action: Consent Item: Continuation of the Student Facilities Safety Fee, Davis Campus

F1D Action: Consent Item: Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center Fourth Floor Patient Care Reconfiguration, UCLA Health, Los Angeles Campus: Budget, Scope, External Financing, and Design Following an Exemption Determination Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act

F1E Action: Consent Item: Hillcrest Multipurpose Clinical Research Building, San Diego Campus: Preliminary Plans Funding

F1F Action: Consent Item: Adoption of Endowment Administration Cost Recovery Rate

F2 Action: Adoption of Expenditure Rate for the General Endowment Pool

F3 Action: Berkeley Innovation Zone, Berkeley Campus: Budget and External Financing for Site Preparation; Scope; Site Preparation Work and South Building Design Following Certification of an Environmental Impact Report Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act; and Acceptance of Gift of Real Property for the South Building

F4 Action: Clean Energy Campus Project – Electrified Heating and Cooling Plant, Distribution Components, and Distributed Energy Resources Phase 1, Berkeley Campus: Budget and External Financing

F5 Action: Medical Campus Operating Room Integration Modernization Project, UC Davis Health, Sacramento Campus: Budget, Scope, and Design Following an Exemption Determination Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act

F6 Action: San Benito Student Housing, Santa Barbara Campus: Preliminary Plans Funding

F7 Action: Fiscal Year 2024-25 Budget for the University of California Office of the President

F8 Discussion: Update on the Governor’s May Revision to the 2024-25 Budget

F9 Information: Pepper Canyon East District, San Diego Campus

--

Upon end of open session:

Finance and Capital Strategies Committee (closed session)

Action: Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of March 20, 2024

F10(X) Action: Off-Campus Housing, Santa Cruz Campus: Amendment of Business Terms for Lease Agreement with Purchase Option

===

Thursday, **May 16, 2024**

8:30 am Board (open session - includes public comment session)

Public Comment Period (30 minutes)

Approval of the Minutes of the Meetings of March 20, 21, and April 10, 2024

Remarks from Student Associations

Resolutions

--

9:30 am **Board** (closed session)

Action: Approval of the Minutes of the Meetings of March 21 and April 10, 2024

B1(X) Action: Update on Safety Concerns on Campuses

Committee Reports Including Approval of Recommendations from Committees:

-Academic and Student Affairs Committee

-Compliance and Audit Committee

-Finance and Capital Strategies Committee

-Governance Committee

-Health Services Committee (meeting of April 10, 2024)

-Special Committee on Athletics

Officers' and President's Reports:

Personnel Matters

Report of Interim, Concurrence, and Committee Actions

Report of Materials Mailed Between Meetings

--

12:30 pm **Joint Meeting of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee & Compliance and Audit Committee** (open session)

Action: Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of March 20, 2024

J1 Action: Adoption of Regents Policy on the Use of University Administrative Websites

Note: This item refers to departmental political statements, a topic deferred from prior meetings.

--

1:15 pm **Board** (open session)

Committee Reports Including Approvals of Recommendations from Committees:

Academic and Student Affairs Committee (meetings of April 10 and May 15, 2024)

-Compliance and Audit Committee

-Governance Committee

-Finance and Capital Strategies Committee

-Health Services Committee (meeting of April 10, 2024)

-Investments (meetings of March 21 and May 14, 2024)

-Special Committee on Athletics

Note: If the Committee approves a tax on UCLA to compensate Berkeley for the impact of UCLA's change in athletic conference, it would be up for approval here.

-Joint Meeting: Academic and Student Affairs Committee and Finance and Capital Strategies Committee

-Joint Meeting: Academic and Student Affairs Committee and Compliance and Audit Committee

Note: If some version of J1 - department political statements - is approved by the joint committees, it will be up for approval in this segment.

B2 Discussion: Merced 2020 Project Overview

Officers' and President's Reports:

-Report of Interim, Concurrence, and Committee Actions

-Report of Materials Mailed Between Meetings

--

2:00 pm **Joint Meeting of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee & Finance and Capital Strategies Committee** (open session)

J2 Discussion: Updates on Federal Financial Aid and Path to Debt-Free UC

Posted by California Policy Issues at 5:00 AM No comments:  

Labels: UC Regents

Sunday, May 5, 2024

UCLA police/security management reshuffle



Rick Braziel *has been put in charge of UCLA security. See below. He operates a police consulting firm. Braziel is a past president of the California Peace Officers Association and was chief of police of Sacramento. He was involved in the U.S. Justice Department review of the police mishandling of the Uvalde, Texas school shooting incident.*

May 5, 2024

Dear Bruin Community:

Protecting the safety of our community underpins everything we do at UCLA. Our students, faculty and staff can only learn, work and thrive in an environment where they feel secure.

In the past week, our campus has been shaken by events that have disturbed this sense of safety and strained trust within our community. In light of this, both UCLA and the UC Office of the President have committed to a thorough investigation of our security processes. But one thing is already clear: To best protect our community moving forward, urgent changes are needed in how we administer safety operations.

I am therefore taking several actions to significantly alter our campus safety structure. These decisions were not made lightly — but my leadership team and I feel that decisive change is needed to help maintain a safe campus environment.

Effective immediately, I am moving oversight and management of UCLA PD and the Office of Emergency Management from the Office of the Administrative Vice Chancellor to a newly created Office of Campus Safety, whose leader reports directly to me. It is clear that UCLA



needs a unit and leader whose sole responsibility is campus safety to guide us through tense times. This organizational structure, which elevates our safety and emergency management operations, has proven to be an effective one at other major universities across the country.

Leading the Office of Campus Safety as its inaugural associate vice chancellor is Rick Braziel, who brings to the position more than 30 years of public safety service, including five years as chief of police for the City of Sacramento. Braziel has also served as an instructor in community policing and has led reviews of law enforcement agencies and police responses.

Additionally, I have created a formal advisory group with expert leaders who will partner with AVC Braziel. Members of this advisory group include UC Davis Chief of Police and Coordinator of the Council of UC Chiefs of Police Joe Farrow, Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Professor of Health Policy and Management Vickie Mays and UC Office of the President Systemwide Director of Community Safety Jody Stiger. I am confident that AVC Braziel, in partnership with this advisory group, will provide effective new leadership of our safety and emergency management operations.

The well-being of our students, faculty and staff is paramount. These actions are essential for creating a secure environment where everyone at UCLA can confidently pursue their studies and careers.

Sincerely,

Gene D. Block

Chancellor

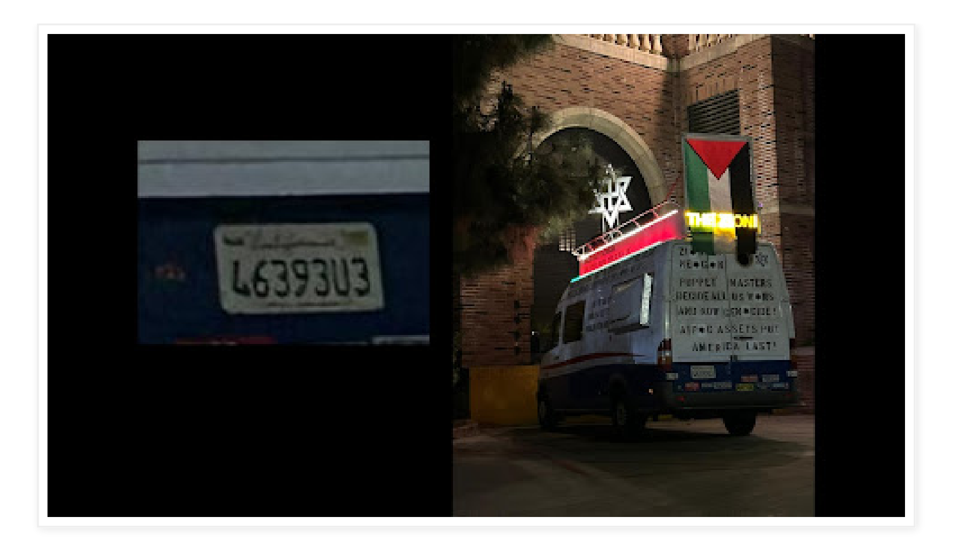
Source: https://chancellor.ucla.edu/messages/changes-to-campus-security-operations/.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 12:51 PM No comments:



Labels: UCLA

May Day



On May 1, a sound truck somehow was parked next to Royce broadcasting antisemitic messages. Video with audio can be found below. The owner of the truck with California license 46393U3 can be identified by UC Police through a request to DMV. Has it been? How did the truck get on campus at a time when the encampment was in progress without anyone in authority noticing? Was there anyone in authority around to notice?



Or direct to https://www.instagram.com/reel/C6dBXxwLnhZ/?igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA%3D%3D.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 5:30 AM No comments:

Labels: UCLA

Columbia

Given recent events at UCLA, it's easy to lose track of other similar events, notably at Columbia University. Below in written and video format is the statement of Columbia's president:



These past two weeks have been among the most difficult in Columbia's history. The turmoil and tension, division and disruption have impacted the entire community.

You, our students, have paid an especially high price. You lost your final days in the classroom and residence halls. For those of you who are seniors, you're finishing college the way you started online.

No matter where you stand on any issue, Columbia should be a community that feels welcoming and safe for everyone. We tried very hard to resolve the issue of the encampment through dialogue. Many people who gathered there were largely peaceful and cared deeply about the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

Academic leaders talked with students for eight days and nights. The university made a sincere and good offer, but it was not accepted. A group of protesters crossed a new line with the occupation of Hamilton Hall. It was a violent act that put our students at risk, as well as putting the protesters at risk. I walked through the building and saw the damage which was distressing.

But despite all that has happened, I have confidence. During the listening sessions I held with many students in recent months, I've been heartened by your intelligence, thoughtfulness and kindness.

The ones that impressed me the most were those who acknowledged that the other side had some valid points. We need more of that at Columbia. Every one of us has a role to play in bringing back the values of truth and civil discourse, that polarization has severely damaged.

Here at Columbia, parallel realities and parallel conversations have walled us off from other perspectives. Working together, I know we can break down these barriers.

As many of you know, I was born in the Middle East. I grew up in a Muslim family with many Jewish and Christian friends. I spent two decades working in international organizations with people from every nationality and religion in the world. Where if you can't bridge divides and see the other side's point of view, you can't get anything done.

I learned from that experience that people can disagree and still make progress.

The issues that are challenging us - Palestinian-Israeli conflict, anti-Semitism, and anti-Arab and anti-Muslim bias - have existed for a long time, and Columbia, despite being a remarkable institution, cannot solve them single-handedly.

What we can do is be an exemplar of a better world, where people who disagree do so civilly, recognize each other's humanity and show empathy and compassion for one another.

We have a lot to do, but I am committed to working at it every day and with each of you to rebuild community on our campus.



Or direct to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LuDsfPv0qOA. [The transcript is on the video site.]

Somewhat parallel to our own chancellor, there is explanation in the statement, but no apology for allowing an extended period in which basic civil norms were allowed to disappear. Heads of colleges and universities are not like the contemporary kings and queens of England, figureheads who do not make policy. Heads of colleges and universities *do* make decisions. And Columbia, as a private university, had more control over access to its campus than does UCLA.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 5:00 AM No comments:

Labels: Columbia, UCLA

Saturday, May 4, 2024

Anderson Graffiti

From an email yesterday:

Dear Anderson Community,

I'm very sorry to report that our UCLA Anderson complex was defaced last night with graffiti, for which there is no excuse. We are working to clear it as quickly as possible, but we did want to forewarn any of you coming to campus of its presence. We will do our best to identify and



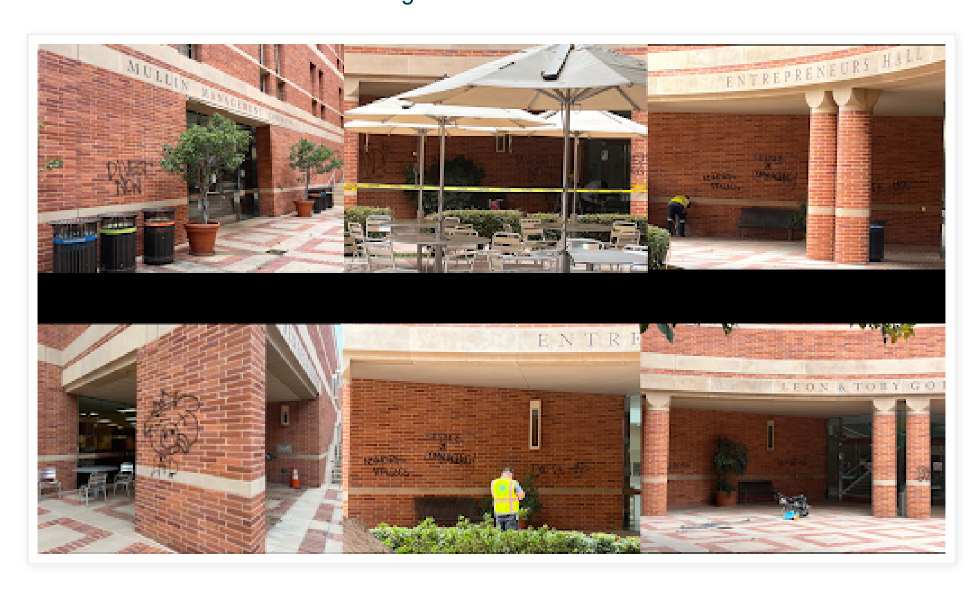
prosecute the person or persons who committed this crime and will increase security to try to prevent any further vandalism.

Best,
Tony

• • •

Tony Bernardo

Dean and John E. Anderson Chair in Management

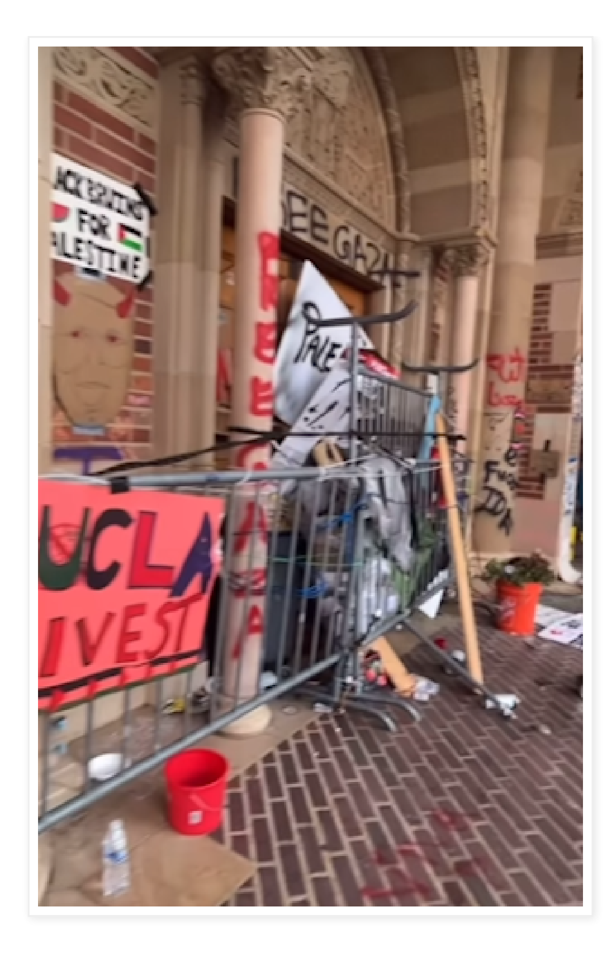


There have been reports of graffiti, including swastikas, on other buildings. For example, here is the Ashe Student Health Center and the Institute for Pure and Applied Mathematics:





And, of course, there is Royce Hall:



Posted by California Policy Issues at 5:00 AM No comments:  

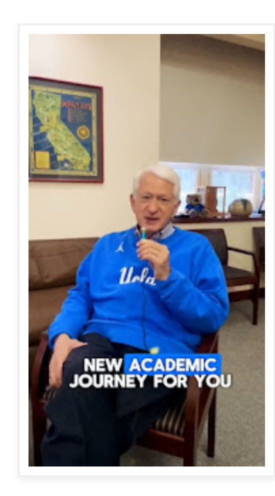
Labels: diversity, UCLA

Friday, May 3, 2024

Chancellor's Statement Lacks Key Element: Apology

Reproduced below is the chancellor's latest statement on the events that led to the clearing of the encampment by police. Unexplained is the lack of effective police presence during the entire episode that lasted over a week, not just the violent episode around midnight on April 30-May 1. As blog readers will know, prior to that announcement, various violations of law and university regulations had occurred. Anyone, including non-UCLA people, had ample evidence from days of social media and conventional TV news that rules were being broken without consequences. That this episode would not end happily was evident as we pointed out in our earlier post, "*Chaos invites chaos*."*

Chancellor Block can now look forward to explaining what happened to a hostile congressional committee. Rather than provide the kind of statement which we reproduce below in his testimony, he might consider making an apology. *"I should have allowed lawful protest while also enforcing basic rules. I failed to do that. I'm sorry."*



May 2, 2024

Chancellor Block shared the following message with the Bruin community.

Dear Bruin Community:

Our community is in deep pain. We are reeling from days of violence and division. And we hope with all our hearts that we can return to a place where our students, faculty and staff feel safe and, one day, connected again.

Our approach to the encampment that was established on Royce Quad last week has been guided by several equally important principles: the need to support the safety and wellbeing of Bruins, the need to support the free expression rights of our community, and the need to minimize disruption to our teaching and learning mission.

The events of the past several days, and especially the terrifying attack on our students, faculty and staff on Tuesday night, have challenged our efforts to live up to these principles and taken an immense toll on our community.

We approached the encampment with the goal of maximizing our community members' ability to make their voices heard on an urgent global issue. We had allowed it to remain in place so long as it did not jeopardize Bruins' safety or harm our ability to carry out our mission.

But while many of the protesters at the encampment remained peaceful, ultimately, the site became a focal point for serious violence as well as a huge disruption to our campus.

Several days of violent clashes between demonstrators and counter-demonstrators put too many Bruins in harm's way and created an environment that was completely unsafe for learning. Demonstrators directly interfered with instruction by blocking students' pathways to classrooms. Indirectly, violence related to the encampment led to the closure of academic buildings and the cancellation of classes. And frankly, hostilities were only continuing to escalate.

In the end, the encampment on Royce Quad was both unlawful and a breach of policy. It led to unsafe conditions on our campus and it damaged our ability to carry out our mission. It needed to come to an end.

Over the past several days, we communicated with and made a formal request to meet with demonstration leaders to discuss options for a peaceful and voluntary disbanding of the encampment. Unfortunately, that meeting did not lead to an agreement.

To preserve campus safety and the continuity of our mission, early this morning, we made the decision to direct UCPD and outside law enforcement officers to enter and clear the encampment. Officers followed a plan that had been carefully developed to protect the safety of protesters at the site. Those who remained encamped last night were given several warnings and were offered the opportunity to leave peacefully with their belongings before officers entered the area. Ultimately, about 300 protesters voluntarily left, while more than 200 resisted orders to disperse and were arrested.

UCLA facilities teams are now in the process of taking down structures and cleaning up the quad, and we ask that students, staff and faculty continue to avoid the area.

I want to be clear that we fully support the right of our community members to protest peacefully, and there are longstanding and robust processes in place that allow students, faculty and staff to gather and demonstrate in ways that do not violate the law or our policies. I urge Bruins to take advantage of these many opportunities, which were designed to support advocacy that does not jeopardize community safety or disrupt the functioning of the university.

I also want to recognize the significance of the issues behind the demonstrators' advocacy. The loss of life in Gaza has been truly devastating, and my administration has and will continue to connect with student and faculty leaders advocating for Palestinian rights to engage in discussions that are grounded in listening, learning and mutual respect. Similarly, we will continue to support our Jewish students and employees who are reeling from the trauma of the brutal Oct. 7 attacks and a painful spike in antisemitism worldwide.

We will also continue to investigate the violent incidents of the past several days, especially Tuesday night's horrific attack by a mob of instigators. When physical violence broke out that night, leadership immediately directed our UCPD police chief to call for the support of outside law enforcement, medical teams and the fire department to help us quell the violence. We are carefully examining our security processes that night and I am grateful to President Drake for also calling for an investigation.

The past week has been among the most painful periods our UCLA community has ever experienced. It has fractured our sense of togetherness and frayed our bonds of trust, and will surely leave a scar on the campus. While Counseling & Psychological Services and Staff & Faculty Counseling Center are available to lend support to those in need, I also hope we can support one another through this difficult moment and reaffirm the ties that unite us as a community of learning.

Sincerely,

Gene D. Block, Chancellor

Source: https://chancellor.ucla.edu/messages/our-community-is-in-deep-pain/.

===

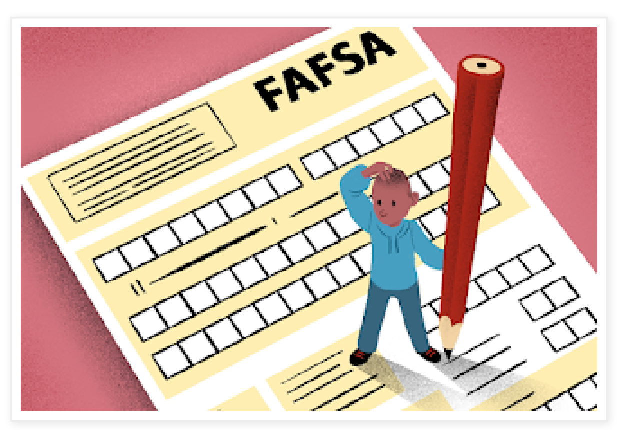
*https://uclafacultyassociation.blogspot.com/2024/05/chaos-invites-chaos.html.



Posted by California Policy Issues at 5:30 AM No comments: 

Labels: politics, UCLA

The FAFSA Drama Continues - Part 12



From Inside Higher Ed: *The Department of Education has implemented a temporary fix to the new Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) that will allow students with parents or guardians who lack a social security number to complete the form, undersecretary of education James Kvaal told reporters at a press briefing Tuesday.*

After months of frustration over persistent technical glitches, the fix will allow mixed-status families to bypass the identity verification system that had been causing problems, enabling them to enter their tax information manually instead of having the system retrieve it from the IRS. The applicants will still have to complete the verification process, but will no longer have to wait until it's done to make a studentaid.gov account and access the online form...

Full story at https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2024/05/01/temporary-fix-lets-mixed-status-families-complete-fafsa.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 5:00 AM No comments:  

Labels: admissions, diversity

Thursday, May 2, 2024

6 AM: It appears the encampment area is clear...

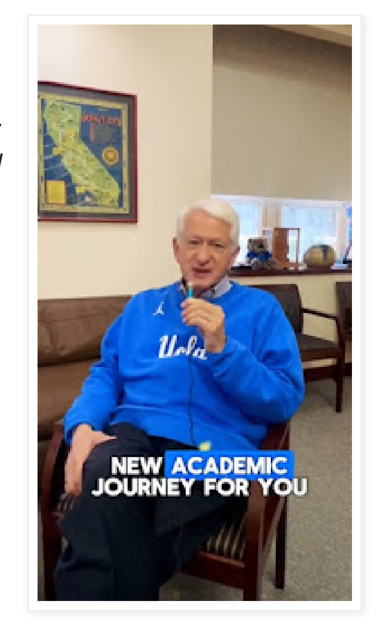
The decision process at Murphy Hall that started last Thursday is not so clear. UC President Drake has called for some kind of investigation.

The Regents are meeting behind closed doors tomorrow, perhaps to create such an investigation.* Yesterday, the chancellor send the message below out:

Chancellor Block shared the following message with the Bruin community.

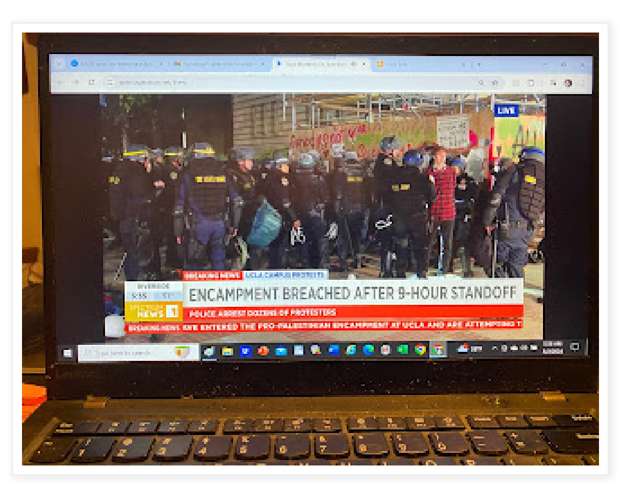
Dear Bruin Community:

Late last night, a group of instigators came to Royce Quad to forcefully attack the encampment that has been established there to advocate for Palestinian rights. Physical violence ensued, and our campus requested support from external law enforcement agencies to help end this appalling assault, quell the fighting and protect our community.



However one feels about the encampment, this attack on our students, faculty and community members was utterly unacceptable. It has shaken our campus to its core and — adding to other abhorrent incidents that we have witnessed and that have circulated on social media over the past several days — further damaged our community's sense of security.

I want to express my sincere sympathy to those who were injured last night, and to all those who have been harmed or have feared for their safety in recent days. No one at this university should have to encounter such violence. Our student affairs team has been reaching out to affected individuals and groups to offer support and connections to health and mental health resources.



I also want to acknowledge the trauma and heartache this has brought to our full campus. Resources are available to students through the Student Affairs websiteand Counseling & Psychological Services, and to employees through the Staff & Faculty Counseling Center.

We are still gathering information about the attack on the encampment last night, and I can assure you that we will conduct a thorough investigation that may lead to arrests, expulsions and dismissals. We are also carefully examining our own security processes in light of recent events. To help in these efforts, I urge those who have encountered violence to report what they experienced to UCPD, and those who have faced discrimination to contact the Civil Rights Office. We are grateful for the support of law enforcement and their efforts to investigate these incidents.

This is a dark chapter in our campus's history. We will restore a safe learning environment at UCLA.

Sincerely,

Gene D. Block

Chancellor

Source: https://chancellor.ucla.edu/messages/condemning-violence-in-our-community/.

===

There is an evolving timeline at the Daily Bruin:

https://dailybruin.com/2024/05/02/lapd-breaches-palestine-solidarity-encampment-at-ucla-in-dispersal-attempt.

News reports indicate a crowd has formed protesting the arresting process. Live TV coverage is available on Spectrum Channel 1. There appears to be relative calm as protesters are loaded on to buses by police.

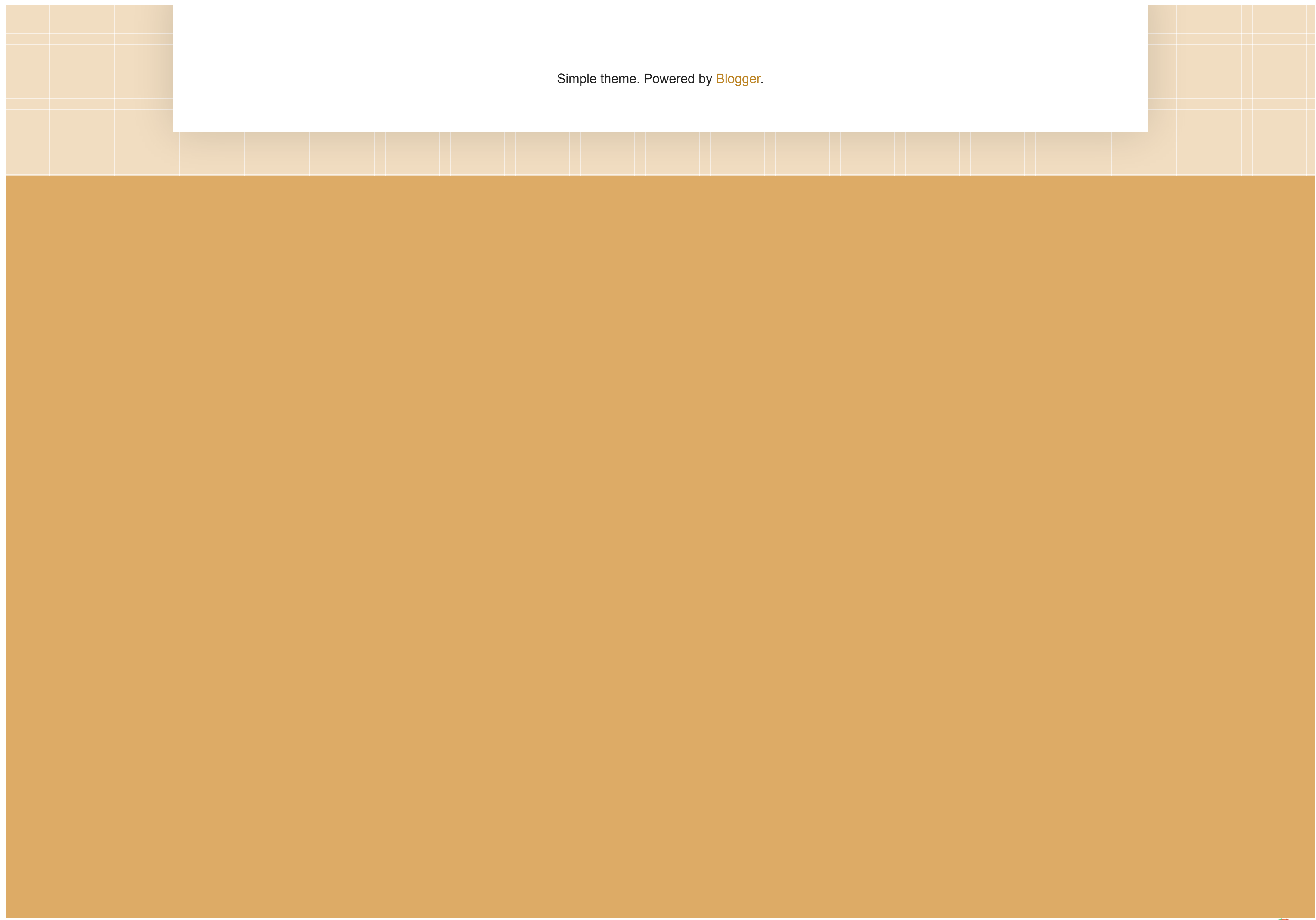
====

*Yesterday, Regent Chair Leib made the statement below:

The violence at UCLA yesterday was despicable and unacceptable. The Regents of the University of California will not tolerate violations of the law or University policy on our campuses, including unlawful encampments, hate speech, and other forms of protest not protected by the First Amendment. While we understand the passions surrounding Israel and Gaza, no cause is free from the consequences of conduct on our campuses.

When students are blocked from public walkways, not allowed entry into campus buildings, and are impeded from accessing educational facilities, it is the responsibility of the campus to prevent these clear violations. The actions that have occurred recently have clearly created an unsafe environment. Protests that interfere with University operations or threaten the safety of students require immediate enforcement of University policies so that violent situations are prevented. It is our priority to ensure the safety of all students and allow equal access to education.

Source: https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/press-room/statement-board-regents-chair-richard-leib-0.


Simple theme. Powered by Blogger.